

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 110563
ORIGIN INR-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03
SIG-03 SS-15 L-03 OC-06 CCO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00
ACDA-12 DODE-00 NSC-05 ICA-11 PA-01 HA-05 /125 R

DRAFTED BY INR/RNA/NE:AAVACCARO:MP
APPROVED BY INR/RNA:PJGRIFFIN
SSM:CWKONTOS
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
SSM

-----125817 012217Z /61

P 012034Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION SINAI PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY
USINT BAGHDAD PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SANA PRIORITY
SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 110563

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
TREASURY DEPARTMENT WASHDC PRIORITY 0000

S E C R E T STATE 110563

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 554 - MAY 1, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

1. ISRAEL. THE "PEACE NOW" MOVEMENT CONTINUES TO ATTRACT WIDESPREAD ATTENTION IN ISRAEL. PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FROM PROMINENT ISRAELI ACADEMICIANS, 10 KNESSET MEMBERS, AND A NUMBER OF DOVISH RABBIS, AND BEGIN'S MEETING WITH MOVEMENT REPRESENTATIVES HAVE KEPT THE MOVEMENT IN THE LIMELIGHT. FOR ALL ITS NEWSWORTHINESS, HOWEVER, "PEACE NOW" THUS FAR HAS MADE ONLY SLIGHT IMPACT ON PUBLIC OPINION AND APPARENTLY NONE ON GOVERNMENT POLICY.

2. IRONICALLY, THE OSTENSIBLE STRENGTHENING OF THE MOVEMENT THAT IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE SUPPORT OF PROMINENT FIGURES COULD REDUCE ITS CHANCES OF EXERTING SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE OVER THE POLICY OF THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT OR THE ISRAELI POLITICAL PROCESS. "PEACE NOW" RUNS THE RISK OF ACQUIRING A PARTISAN IMAGE. IF THE MOVEMENT BECOMES WIDELY VIEWED AS THE POLITICAL TOOL OF THE LABOR OPPOSITION, ITS HOPE OF WINNING POPULAR SUPPORT WOULD BE SHARPLY REDUCED.

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 110563

THE DEMOGRAPHIC POLARIZATION THAT CRYSTALLIZED DURING THE KNESSET ELECTION LAST YEAR SHOWS NO SIGNS OF HAVING BEEN BREACHED BY "PEACE NOW" WHICH IS A PATENTLY MIDDLE-CLASS EUROPEAN PHENOMENON. UNLESS IT CAN WIN SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT IN THE ORIENTAL COMMUNITY, ITS POLITICAL WEIGHT WILL BE MINIMAL.

3. GRASS ROOTS MOVEMENTS IN ISRAEL GENERALLY HAVE HAD LITTLE IMPACT ON POLICYMAKING OR POLITICS. TWO NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS OCCURRED JUST BEFORE THE OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING IN JUNE 1967 AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE OCTOBER 1973 WAR. IN EACH CASE, KEY ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNING COALITION SHARED PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS.

4. IN THE PRESENT SITUATION, A PROTEST MOVEMENT WOULD HAVE TO ACQUIRE THE SUPPORT OF KEY COMPONENTS OF THE COALITION IF IT WERE TO BECOME POLITICALLY EFFECTIVE. THE "PEACE NOW" MOVEMENT, HOWEVER, FACES AN UPHILL STRUGGLE. FACTORS BEARING ON THAT ASSESSMENT:

(A) THE DMC LACKS THE POWER EITHER TO BRING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT OR TO FORCE A CHANGE IN POLICY.

(B) THE AGUDAT ISRAEL WILL NOT READILY SUCCUMB TO THE BLANDISHMENTS OF "PEACE NOW," GIVEN THE PARTY'S FIXATION ON RELIGIOUS ISSUES AND ITS APPARENT SATISFACTION WITH BEGIN'S PRO-

RELIGIOUS STANCE.

(C) THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (NRP) CONTAINS DOVISH ELEMENTS, BUT ITS INTERNAL BALANCE CONTINUES TO FAVOR THE HAWKS.

(D) THE LIBERAL PARTY IS DIVIDED BETWEEN A MILITANTLY HAWKISH FACTION AND A MORE DOVISH GROUP, BOTH OF WHICH RETAIN A VESTED INTEREST
SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 110563

IN MAINTAINING THE 13-YEAR-OLD ALLIANCE WITH HERUT. LIBERALS WILL NOT WANT TO JEOPARDIZE THEIR POLITICAL FUTURE, BUT THEY MAY TRY TO MODERATE BEGIN'S HARD LINE.

5. ON BALANCE, DOVISH ELEMENTS AMONG THE ORIGINAL COALITION PARTIES (LIKUD, NRP, AGUDAT ISRAEL) ARE NOT READY TO PROVOKE A POLITICAL CRISIS AT THIS TIME. ALTHOUGH WORRIED ABOUT THE IMPACT ON ISRAEL'S IMAGE OF ITS WEST BANK STANCE, COALITION DOVES REGARD THE ALLEGED US PEACE PLAN AS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. IN THIS RESPECT, THEY AGREE WITH THE LABOR PARTY. THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COALITION DOVES AND LABOR DOVES IS THAT THE FORMER DOUBT THAT A

POLITICAL CRISIS DESIGNED TO OBTAIN GOVERNMENT ACCEPTANCE OF THE ALIGNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY PLATFORM WOULD ALLEVIATE ISRAEL'S FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS, GIVEN THE LARGE GAP SEPARATING THE US AND ISRAEL POSITIONS. (CONFIDENTIAL)

6. EGYPT. THE EGYPTIANS ARE SHOWING GREAT SENSITIVITY TO WHAT THEY PERCEIVE AS POSSIBLY SLIPPAGE IN THE US COMMITMENT TO THE PEACE PROCESS. THEY HAVE REACTED WITH DISMAY TO PRESS REPORTS THAT THE AIRCRAFT PACKAGE HAS BEEN BROKEN APART AND THAT EACH SALE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED SEPARATELY ON ITS OWN MERITS AND TO THE AL AHRAH VERSION OF THE INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT CARTER PRINTED IN THE SUNDAY TIMES, QUOTING HIM AS SAYING THAT A "MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT WILL BE REALIZED WITHOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE," AND THAT "THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK WILL BE BASED MOSTLY ON THE BEGIN PLAN FOR GRANTING SELF-RULE."

7. THE AIRCRAFT ISSUE HAS BECOME PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT
SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 110563

IN CAIRO. LATE LAST WEEK GUMHURIYYA EDITORIALIZED THAT THE AIRCRAFT SALE HAD BECOME THE TOUCHSTONE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S MIDEAST POLICY. THE NEWSPAPER EXPRESSED THE WIDELY HELD VIEW IN EGYPT THAT A "ZIONIST CAMPAIGN" IS

UNDERWAY AGAINST THE SALE. ACCORDING TO GUMHURRIYYA, PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ENUNCIATED A POLICY WHICH SERVES THE US NATIONAL INTEREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST. A REJECTION OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE AIRCRAFT SALE WOULD BE A VICTORY FOR THE "ZIONISTS" AND WOULD HAVE A BAD EFFECT ON FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

8. AFTER THE HEAVY EMPHASIS IN WASHINGTON ON THE AIRCRAFT SALES AS A "PACKAGE," THE SEPARATE SUBMISSIONS WERE TOTALLY MISUNDERSTOOD IN CAIRO. THE GENERAL VIEW WAS THAT THE SEPARATE SUBMISSIONS REPRESENTED A VICTORY FOR THE ISRAELIS AND THEIR ALLIES IN THE US AND REPRESENTED A RETREAT BY THE WHITE HOUSE IN FACE OF PRO-ISRAELI CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE. THIS "VICTORY" HAS OMINOUS OVERTONES, IN THE EGYPTIAN VIEW, FOR THE FUTURE OF THE PEACE PROCESS.

9. EGYPTIAN CONCERNS WERE COMPOUNDED BY THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENTS AS REPORTED IN THE SUNDAY TIMES. IN RESPONSE, KAMIL REEMPHASIZED ON CAIRO RADIO EGYPT'S CATEGORIC REJECTION OF THE BEGIN PLAN. THE PRESIDENT'S REFERENCE TO BEGIN'S PROPOSAL WAS VIEWED AS AN ADDITIONAL INDICATION OF A WEAKENING US COMMITMENT TO PEACE. THE EGYPTIANS FOUND THIS COMMENT PARTICULARLY DISCONCERTING BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THAT MORE PRESSURE ON ISRAEL IS NEEDED NOW AND NOT LESS.

10. THE EXCESSIVE EGYPTIAN REACTION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN AT LEAST PARTIALLY GENERATED BY A GROWING FEELING OF BELEAGUERMENT AT HOME AND ISOLATION FROM THE REST OF THE ARAB WORLD. IN MOST ARAB CAPITALS SADAT'S INITIATIVE IS WIDELY CONSIDERED AS HAVING FAILED. PROSPECTS OF BROADENING PARTICIPATION IN THE TALKS ARE
SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 110563

SEEN AS HAVING SAGGED IN FACE OF HUSSEIN'S INCREASING SKITTISHNESS ABOUT JOINING THE NEGOTIATIONS. AS A RESULT, SADAT IS REGARDED AS HAVING BECOME EVEN MORE DEPENDENT ON THE US. THUS A PERCEIVED REDUCTION IN WASHINGTON'S COMMITMENT THREATENS TO EXTINGUISH HOPES FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT AND IS REGARDED AS HAVING PROVED SADAT'S DETRACTORS CORRECT.

11. IN ADDITION, DEVELOPMENTS THAT SUGGEST A MAJOR SHIFT IN US POLICY WOULD HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON SADAT'S DOMESTIC POSITION. HE ALREADY IS VERY CONCERNED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT APPEARS INEPT. SADAT HAS DEVOTED MUCH ENERGY AND PERSONAL PRESTIGE TO ATTAINING PEACE, AND A SHIFT IN THE US POSITION WOULD DISCREDIT MUCH OF HIS EFFORT AND GIVE AMMUNITION TO HIS CRITICS OF THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT. THE ARMS SUBMISSION AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S INTERVIEW HAVE OCCURRED AT A MOMENT WHEN SADAT IS PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE. (SECRET)

12. SYRIA. THE SYRIAN MINISTER OF INFORMATION STATED ON SATURDAY THAT SYRIA WOULD NOT ATTEND ANY ARAB SUMMIT SO LONG AS ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE. MEANWHILE, EMBASSY DAMASCUS NOTED THAT THE SYRIAN MEDIA HAS HEATED UP ITS CRITICISM OF SADAT. THE TIMING OF THE ATTACKS SUGGESTED THAT THEY REFLECTED SYRIA'S REPLY TO VARIOUS ENTREATIES BY JORDANIAN AND KUWAITI ENVOYS CALLING FOR SYRIA TO ATTEND A SUMMIT CONFERENCE AIMED AT RECONCILING EGYPT AND THE "STEADFAST" STATES. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

13. LEBANON. AMID A WEEKEND OF SPORADIC VIOLENCE IN BEIRUT RESULTING IN SEVERAL DEATHS, AL-HOSS HAS BEEN ASKED TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT. THIS WILL MEAN THAT SARKIS, BOUTROS AND AL-HOSS ARE LIKELY TO DOMINATE THE NEXT GOVERNMENT.
SECRET

PAGE 07 STATE 110563

MENT AS THEY DID THE LAST. WHILE WE ARE NOT CERTAIN, IT NOW APPEARS LIKELY THAT FEW PROMINENT SUNNI MUSLIM POLITICIANS WILL PLAY A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE NEXT GOVERNMENT, WHICH COULD CREATE SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR SARKIS.

14. MEANWHILE, ISRAELI FORCES HAVE MADE THEIR THIRD AND LARGEST WITHDRAWAL YET UNDERTAKEN IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. ISRAELI TROOPS NOW OCCUPY POSITIONS ALONG A LINE THAT WAS SET AS THEIR ORIGINAL OBJECTIVE IN THEIR MARCH INVASION, LEAVING THEM IN CONTROL OF A FOUR-TO-SEVEN MILE ZONE. THIS ZONE STILL EMBRACES THE THREE MAIN LEBANESE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES ALONG THE BORDER.

15. AS THE ISRAELIS LEAVE REFUGEES CONTINUE TO RETURN TO SOUTHERN LEBANON. IT IS NOW ESTIMATED THAT BETWEEN 40,000 AND 60,000 HAVE RETURNED TO THE AREA SOUTH OF THE LITANI. A UN REPRESENTATIVE DRIVING THROUGH 25 SOUTHERN LEBANESE VILLAGES IN IDF HELD TERRITORY REPORTED 1,250 HOMES WERE DESTROYED AND 3,000 DAMAGED TO A LESSER DEGREE. VIRTUALLY ALL THE ELECTRICAL LINES ARE DOWN AND THE WATER SUPPLIES ARE LIMITED TO WELLS, SOME ARE POLUTED. THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON REFUGEES ESTIMATES THAT IT WILL TAKE \$10 MILLION TO REBUILD THE AREA.

16. EMBASSY DAMASCUS REPORTS THAT SOME SENIOR SYRIAN GOVERNMENT AND BAATH PARTY OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO RAISE THE SPECTRE OF SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON IF STRONG OPPOSITION TO THEIR ROLE CONTINUES, ALTHOUGH THE SYRIANS APPARENTLY FEEL THEY HAVE MUCH TO LOSE BY PULLING OUT. ONE EMBASSY SOURCE BELIEVES THAT AT LEAST SOME SYRIAN OFFICIALS QUESTION THE NEED FOR AN ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON, A LINE SUPPORTED BY SOME PALESTINIAN OFFICIALS IN SYRIA. NEVERTHELESS, THE SYRIAN PRESS HAS LATELY TILTED DECIDEDLY TOWARDS THE PLO AND HAS BITTERLY CRITICIZED THE POLICIES OF SOME RIGHTIST

LEBANESE POLITICIANS. THE EMBASSY COMMENTS THAT THERE
SECRET

PAGE 08 STATE 110563

SEEMS TO BE SOME MOVEMENT IN THE SYRIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD
THE LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN DILEMMA AWAY FROM A SIMPLE
RETURN TO THE CAIRO ACCORD. (CONFIDENTIAL) CHRISTOPHER

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 sep 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SUMMARIES, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE110563
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: INR/RNA/NE:AAVACCARO:MP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 XGDS-2
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D780185-1184
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197805112/baaaeynq.tel
Line Count: 282
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 74763895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN INR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2539279
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTSUM 554 - MAY 1, 1978
TAGS: PINR, EG, IS, XF
To: SINAI INFO ABU DHABI MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/74763895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014